

**Notice of Allowability**

Application No.

09/738,988

Examiner

Johnna R Stimpak

Applicant(s)

CASTELLANI ET AL.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the amendment filed 2/7/05.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-20.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 1/15/02 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) ☐ All   b) ☐ Some\*   c) ☐ None   of the:
    1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
    3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
  6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS ( as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
    - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review ( PTO-948) attached
      - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
    - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

**Attachment(s)**

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),  
Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit  
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),  
Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

  
**TARIQ R. HAFIZ**  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600

### EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Thomas Zell on 5/13/05.

The application has been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A method for mixed human and computer-supported distributed scheduling of a task according to scheduling decisions within a plurality of workplaces, said workplaces being connected to each other and to a shared negotiation facility via a computer network, the method comprising:

electronically recording a first scheduling decision manually expressed on a first scheduling board within a first of said workspaces and creating first scheduling decision data which represent the first scheduling decision in a computer-readable form;

electronically recording a second scheduling decision manually expressed on a second scheduling board within a second of said workspaces and creating second scheduling decision data which represent the second scheduling decision in a computer-readable form;

recognizing requests for task outsourcing manually expressed on the scheduling boards of said workspaces using a first shape and requests for task insourcing manually expressed on the scheduling boards of said workspaces using a second shape distinct from the first shape;

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transferring the first scheduling decision data and the second scheduling decision data via the computer network to the shared negotiation facility;

negotiating said task within the shared negotiation facility by combining the first scheduling decision data with the second scheduling decision data received from at least said first of said workplaces and said second of said workplaces and creating negotiation result data which represent results of negotiating said task; and

transferring said negotiation result data to at least said first and said second of said workspaces for indicating scheduling information specifying at least one of:

(i) in-sourcing said task to said first of said workspaces when the second scheduling decision indicates, using the first shape, a request for outsourcing and the first scheduling decision indicates, using the second shape, a free time slot for task in-sourcing that satisfies start time and completion time of the second scheduling decision; and

(ii) outsourcing said task from said first of said workspaces when the first scheduling decision indicates, using the first shape, a request for task outsourcing and the second scheduling decision indicates, using the second shape, a free time slot for task-insourcing that satisfies start and completion time of the first scheduling decision.

11. (Amended) An apparatus for mixed human and computer supported distributed scheduling of tasks within a plurality of workplaces, comprising:

a first scheduling board located in a first of said workplaces and a second scheduling board located in a second of said workplaces;

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recording devices located in at least the first and the second workplaces for electronically recording [said scheduling decision] scheduling decisions and creating scheduling decision data which represent the scheduling decisions in a computer-readable form;

a shared negotiation facility for negotiating a scheduling task according to the scheduling decisions among said plurality of workplaces;

a computer network connecting said workplaces to each other and to the shared negotiation facility for transferring said scheduling decision data to said shared negotiation facility;

wherein said first and said second workplaces, said shared negotiation facility and said computer network operating together to:

electronically record a first scheduling decision manually expressed on a first scheduling board within a first of said workspaces and creating first scheduling decision data which represent the first scheduling decision in a computer-readable form;

electronically record a second scheduling decision manually expressed on a second scheduling board within a second of said workspaces and creating second scheduling decision data which represent the second scheduling decision in a computer-readable form;

recognize requests for task outsourcing manually expressed on the scheduling boards of said workspaces using a first shape and requests for task insourcing manually expressed on the scheduling boards of said workspaces using a second shape distinct from the first shape;

transfer the first scheduling decision data and the second scheduling decision data via the computer network to the shared negotiation facility;

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negotiate said task within the shared negotiation facility by combining the first scheduling decision data with the second scheduling decision data received from at least said first of said workplaces and said second of said workplaces and creating negotiation result data which represent results of negotiating said task; and

transfer said negotiation result data to at least said first and said second of said workspaces for indicating scheduling information specifying at least one of:

(i) in-sourcing said task to said first of said workspaces when the second scheduling decision indicates, using the first shape, a request for outsourcing and the first scheduling decision indicates, using the second shape, a free time slot for task in-sourcing that satisfies start time and completion time of the second scheduling decision; and

(ii) outsourcing said task from said first of said workspaces when the first scheduling decision indicates, using the first shape, a request for task outsourcing and the second scheduling decision indicates, using the second shape, a free time slot for task-insourcing that satisfies start and completion time of the first scheduling decision.

20. (Amended) A method for mixed human and computer-supported distributed scheduling of a task according to scheduling decisions within a plurality of workplaces, said workplaces being connected to each other and to a shared negotiation facility via a computer network, the method comprising:

electronically recording a first scheduling decision and a second scheduling decision with at least one time slot with a control mark and at least one time slot without a control mark manually expressed on a first scheduling board within a first of said workspaces and a second scheduling board within a second of said workplaces, respectively;

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recognizing requests for task outsourcing manually expressed on the scheduling boards of said workspaces using a first shape and requests for task insourcing manually expressed on the scheduling boards of said workspaces using a second shape distinct from the first shape;

creating first scheduling decision data and second scheduling decision data which represent the first scheduling decision and the second scheduling decision data, respectively, in a computer-readable form;

searching in the first scheduling decision data and the second scheduling decision data for time slots with control marks;

transferring in-source and outsource time slots with control marks in the first scheduling decision data and the second scheduling decision data via the computer network to the shared negotiation facility;

negotiating said task within the shared negotiation facility by combining the first scheduling decision data with the second scheduling decision data received from at least said first of said workplaces and said second of said workplaces and creating negotiation result data which represent results of negotiating said task; and

transferring said negotiation result data to at least said first and said second of said workspaces for indicating scheduling information specifying at least one of:

(i) in-sourcing said task to said first of said workspaces when the second scheduling decision indicates, using the first shape, a request for outsourcing and the first scheduling decision indicates, using the second shape, a free time slot for task in-sourcing that satisfies start time and completion time of the second scheduling decision; and

(ii) outsourcing said task from said first of said workspaces when the first scheduling decision indicates, using the first shape, a request for task outsourcing and the second scheduling decision indicates, using the second shape, a free time slot for task-insourcing that satisfies start and completion time of the first scheduling decision.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The cited prior art taken alone or in combination fails to teach the claimed invention set forth in claims 1-20. Specifically, the invention set forth in claims 1-20 is directed to a method and apparatus for electronically recording a first scheduling decision manually expressed on a scheduling board within a first of workplaces and second scheduling decision manually expressed on a scheduling board within a second of workplaces wherein task outsourcing requests are manually expressed using a first shape and requests for task insourcing are manually expressed using a second shape distinct from the first shape. The scheduling decisions are transferred to a negotiation facility wherein in-sourcing said task to said first of said workspaces when the second scheduling decision indicates, using the first shape, a request for outsourcing and the first scheduling decision indicates, using the second shape, a free time slot for task in-sourcing that satisfies start time and completion time of the second scheduling decision; and outsourcing said task from said first of said workspaces when the first scheduling decision indicates, using the first shape, a request for task outsourcing and the second scheduling decision indicates, using the second shape, a free time slot for task-insourcing that satisfies start and completion time of the first scheduling decision. Tasks are only scheduled into time period with an indication that there is free time. The closest prior art, Clary et al, US 6,144,371, teaches using electronic scheduling

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boards to facilitate schedule coordination wherein tasks are scheduled into a time slot if there is nothing in the slot. However, Clary et al fails to include indicating, using distinct first and second shapes, a request for outsourcing and a free time slot for task insourcing.

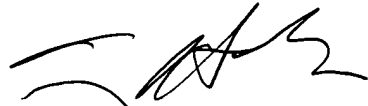
Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Johnna R Stimpak whose telephone number is 571-272-6736. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on 571-272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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5/16/05

  
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